

Good file preparation:

insures consistent, predictable results
helps reduce delays and additional charges

Gathering Your Files

Be certain you have sent all the files needed to run your job. There are a number of automated methods to gather your files. However, don't skip using our checklist on the work order to be sure the automated methods do not miss something we need. Use these functions to save to a new folder so that no unnecessary files end up in the final folder.

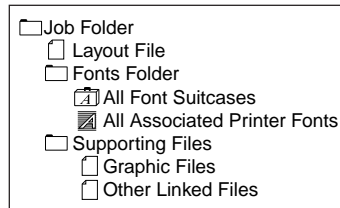
1. QuarkXPress has "Collect For Output" that will collect all the files and prepare a report.
2. PageMaker has an option in the save command that will copy "Files for Remote Printing". To generate a report showing font listings, PageMaker has an Addition (v.5.x) or a Plug-In (v6.x) that will display "Pub Info".

These functions do not collect fonts. Use the reports to help gather the necessary fonts.

Be careful with nested graphics. If you have a PhotoShop file placed in Illustrator then saved as an EPS file and placed in a layout program, the fonts used in Illustrator will not be included, nor listed in the layout programs report. The PhotoShop graphic will only be included if the option "include placed graphics" is checked when saved.

Organizing Your Files

We suggest the following organization for your folders or directories. If you follow these conventions it will help speed the processing of your order by making it easier for us to locate your files, reducing confusion. Please include all necessary files but do not send any extra files such as fonts or graphics that are not part of the current job.



Hard Copy

The importance of submitting a final proof or printed sample cannot be overstressed. If we have no proof to match, we will have to print the job on the assumption that it has rendered identically on our system and yours. If this is not the case, we cannot be held responsible. If you do provide a proof, we will check our pre-press proof against it thoroughly for any differences. Please be sure to print the proof at 100%.

Fonts

The single biggest reason why files do not produce expected results is: **FONTS!!!** According to some national estimates, bad or missing fonts account for 82% of all delays and additional charges. To print your job properly, **you must send us the fonts you used in your layout.** We do have a large font library but we may not have the exact one you used in your job. Since there are many versions of the same fonts sold by different vendors, your font may not match our font of the same name.

Cheap Fonts

Bargain fonts are worth what you pay for them. 5,000 fonts for \$29.95, do not use them! Often they do not perform on an imagesetter the same as they do on a laser printer. If there is a font you must use, set the type in an illustration program (like Illustrator) and convert to paths. This way, you control leading & kerning exactly and they will reproduce the same on our imagesetter.

PostScript vs. TrueType

There are two types of fonts: PostScript and TrueType. PostScript fonts are highly recommended. They are more reliable, cleaner and process more quickly. In certain trapping situations, TrueType fonts will not work at all. Be sure to provide all files needed for every font you use, both in your layout program and in any embedded illustrations (EPS files). One screen "Suitcase" may require many Printer Fonts.

Stylized Fonts: No. Period.

Some programs allow you to apply styles (italic, bold, bold-italic) to a plain font to approximate the real font variant. **Do not use this option!** A stylized font will in many instances be replaced by the plain variant when RIPed. Express Color will not be held responsible if this happens.

Use the font variant that is the style you want, not the plain variant with an applied style. For instance, use the HelveticaBold font instead of the HelveticaBook font styled Bold.

Missing Fonts

Take close look at your files to find out what fonts you need to send. Remember that enclosed EPS files also need fonts to properly render. Jobs with missing fonts will be delayed until you are contacted and either approve a substitution or can send the fonts to us. If substitution causes text reflow, we will not be held responsible.

Remember, PostScript fonts have two files, a screen font and a printer font. Both are required.

Trapping

Do not trap your job. We have sophisticated trapping software to properly trap all jobs, free of charge. If you have special reasons to apply your own traps, please contact us first.

Process vs. Spot Color

You must specify all colors to print with the proper inks. If your print job calls for black ink and a PMS, that PMS color cannot be electronically defined as using process inks. The same applies to process jobs, the colors cannot be defined as spot inks.

Most applications allow both spot and process color definition. Do not confuse type of ink with model. A color can be defined using the Pantone Matching System as the model and the type as Process. This produces a 4 color process simulation of the PMS Spot color selected.

To be sure you have defined all colors properly, print separations on your laser printer and check that all the color elements are on the right plate and that they are screened properly. If a color is intended to be a 100% fill of a PMS spot color and it prints out screened on the Cyan, Magenta, Yellow or Black plate, then the color definition in the originating program is wrong. The model may have been set to PMS however the Type was set to Process (PageMaker) or the Process Separation (Quark) was turned on.

Scans

4 Color & Grayscale

Image resolution is usually expressed in terms of Dots Per Inch (DPI). The DPI of a given image is one of the key factors in determining the final output size of the image and how well the image will reproduce.

There is some debate and confusion about how many dots per inch you need for good reproduction. Just because your scanner will go to 1,200 or more DPI does not mean that setting will give you a better print, only that you can scale it more. When color or black & white scans are imaged, they are turned into screens. Screens are measured in Lines Per Inch (LPI) and vary according to paper, press and type of image. The debate centers over how many DPI you need for a given LPI. The majority of "Experts" recommends your DPI be between 1.5 and 2 times desired line screen. Express Color uses 300 DPI for all our scans. This resolution produces superior results for screens up to 200 LPI.

The DPI also affects the size of an image in terms of megabytes (Mb) and thus how the image will be stored, transported and output. An 8" x 10" image in CMYK at 300 DPI is approximately 27.5 Mb, at 600 DPI the file is 110 Mb. The same applies to size. If you only need the final size to be 4" x 5", at 300 DPI the file size will only be 6.9 Mb. Therefore, you should scan to produce the final size needed, at the proper resolution.

Submit all color files in CMYK color. When converting a file from RGB to CMYK, you may notice a slight change in the image color. If you must submit a file in RGB mode, we will convert it to CMYK for you, but you should be aware that some colors may shift in hue or desaturate. Also, converting a large file (10+ Mb) from RGB to CMYK may incur an additional cost due to the additional prepress time required.

Bad Scans

Providing scans lower than 300 DPI or using GIF or JPEG compression will show noticeable image deterioration. Excessively high resolution images are significantly larger without improving the quality of the printed image, and may incur additional charges for RIP time.

Line-Art (Bitmapped)

Line-art scans should be done at a higher resolution and at an even divisor of 2540, such as 635 DPI. They need this higher resolution to reproduce well and to define clean edges. Line-art should be scanned at the highest optical resolution your scanner is capable of, not the interpolated resolution.